



NCHS Data Access and Resources

About NCHS

The National Center for Health Statistics (NCHS) is the Nation's principal health statistics agency, providing data to identify and address health issues affecting the U.S. population. NCHS compiles statistical information to help guide public health and health policy decisions. Collaborating with other public and private health partners, NCHS employs a variety of data collection mechanisms to obtain accurate information from multiple sources. NCHS' data provides a broad perspective to help us understand the nation's health, influences on health, and health outcomes.

Accessing NCHS Data

NCHS releases data from its surveys and systems in a variety of ways to accommodate users with varying needs and interests, including policymakers, researchers, medical and public health professionals, teachers, students, business leaders, and the general public.

Reports and Publications

Each year, NCHS produces hundreds of reports and other publications in a variety of formats, both electronic and hard copy form.

- **Data Briefs** summarize the latest data on current health issues in eight pages of easily understandable text and graphics. <http://www.cdc.gov/nchs/products/databriefs.htm>.
- **National Health Statistics Reports** provide annual data summaries, analyses of health topics, or new information on methods or measurement issues. <http://www.cdc.gov/nchs/products/nhsr.htm>.
- **National Vital Statistics Reports** provide data on vital events – births, deaths, and fetal deaths – using tables and charts, along with analyses and discussion. Examples include preliminary and final annual birth and death data, leading causes of death, and pregnancy rates. <http://www.cdc.gov/nchs/products/nvsr.htm>.
- **Health E-Stats** are brief reports published several times each year on current and timely health topics, such as trends in fertility rates and the prevalence of obesity. <http://www.cdc.gov/nchs/products/hstats.htm>.
- **QuickStats** highlight survey findings in a chart and brief caption and appear each week as part of the CDC's Morbidity and Mortality Weekly Report. <http://www.cdc.gov/nchs/pressroom/quickstats.htm>.
- **Life Tables** are annual reports that track life expectancy in the United States by age, race, and sex. Every 10 years, NCHS also releases a decennial volume of life expectancy data, with one volume for each state. http://www.cdc.gov/nchs/products/life_tables.htm.
- **Early Releases** are online analytic reports and preliminary microdata files provided on an expedited schedule by the National Health Interview Survey (NHIS). These include the following three periodic reports. *Selected Estimates Based on Data From the National Health Interview Survey* is published quarterly and provides estimates of 15 health measures, ranging from vaccinations to obesity. *Health Insurance Coverage: Estimates From the National Health Interview Survey* is published quarterly and provides estimates of health insurance coverage by selected demographic characteristics. *Wireless Substitution: Estimates From the National Health Interview Survey* is published biannually and provides updated estimates of trends in the use of landline and wireless telephones by persons and in households. <http://www.cdc.gov/nchs/nhis/releases.htm>.
- **Fact Sheets** provide brief summaries of the NCHS surveys and data systems and of topics of interest to policymakers and the general public. http://www.cdc.gov/nchs/about/fact_sheets.htm.

- **Vital and Health Statistics Series Reports** provide details on survey design and operation, methods of statistical analysis, and statistics derived from data collection systems or a family of related systems. <http://www.cdc.gov/nchs/products/series.htm>.
- **Health, United States** is an annual report on the health status of the Nation, submitted by the Secretary of Health and Human Services to the President and Congress. The report contains a chartbook that presents trends on selected measures of morbidity, mortality, health care use, health risk factors, prevention, health insurance, and personal health care expenditures. Detailed tables display national trends in health statistics on topics including health status and its determinants and health care resources and their use. Each year, the chartbook presents a special feature on a topic of importance to current public health discussions, such as emergency care or socioeconomic status as it relates to health. <http://www.cdc.gov/nchs/hus.htm>.
- **Healthy People Reviews** measure the Nation's progress toward achieving Healthy People 2010 and 2020 benchmarks for health promotion and disease prevention using data from NCHS data systems, other federal data systems, and other data sources. http://www.cdc.gov/nchs/healthy_people/publications.htm.

Microdata Files

NCHS provides access to its rich data sets so researchers can conduct their own analyses and add to our knowledge of health issues.

- **Public-use documentation and data files** available through an FTP server, provide users with free access to data sets, documentation, and questionnaires from NCHS surveys and data collection systems. http://www.cdc.gov/nchs/data_access/ftp_data.htm.
- Non-public-use data files are available through a network of **Research Data Centers** that provide secure access to detailed data that cannot be released online due to confidentiality concerns. <http://www.cdc.gov/rdc/index.htm>.
- **NCHS Data Linkage Program** allows researchers to study factors that influence disability, chronic disease, health care use, morbidity, and mortality through the linkage of NCHS survey data with data from administrative records and other surveys. http://www.cdc.gov/nchs/data_access/data_linkage_activities.htm.
- **National Death Index (NDI)** is a database of all deaths in the United States (beginning with 1979), derived from state death certificates. NDI is a resource for epidemiologists and other health and medical investigators in their mortality ascertainment activities. <http://www.cdc.gov/nchs/ndi.htm>.

Online Resources and Tools

The NCHS website provides access to key health data as well as tools that allow users to display data to fit their needs. A list of data access tools is available from http://www.cdc.gov/nchs/data_access/data_tools.htm.

- **FastStats A to Z** provides quick access to statistics and associated Web links as well as and pre-built tables on topics of public health importance, including diseases, health-related behaviors, injuries, health care, and health insurance. <http://www.cdc.gov/nchs/fastats/>.
- **VitalStats** allows users to access and examine vital statistics and population data. Users can take advantage of prebuilt tables and reports or use the data files to create custom tables. <http://www.cdc.gov/nchs/vitalstats.htm>.
- **Health Indicators Warehouse** serves as the federal data hub for access to national, state, and community health indicators and data. Users can map, chart, tabulate, and download indicator data and metadata. <http://healthindicators.gov/>.
- **Health Data Interactive** presents interactive national data tables that can be customized to explore different trends and patterns among Americans, by age, sex, race and ethnicity, and geographic location. <http://www.cdc.gov/nchs/hdi.htm>.
- **Health, United States, Interactive** enables users to view, create, and export *Health, United States* charts and tables and incorporate additional data from the full annual report. <http://www.cdc.gov/nchs/hus.htm>.

For further information about NCHS and its programs, visit us at <http://www.cdc.gov/nchs>, or call the Office of Planning, Budget and Legislation at 301-458-4100

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